

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

EVALUATION OF THE PH.D. DEFENSE PERFORMANCE

The attached evaluation has been formulated and approved for use by the GSBS standing committees in an effort to assist students and faculty alike. The evaluation should be of assistance to students since they will provide guidelines as to what will be expected of students by faculty during their defense. The evaluation should be of assistance to faculty in that they will provide guidelines for assessing student performance during the defense. They are by no means the only criteria by which students may be assessed, and they are not intended to specifically dictate to faculty how to assess student performance.

After the Defense, the completed evaluation should be submitted to the GSBS Office of Academic Affairs along with the Results of the Defense form. **The Advisory Committee submits one form that reflects the composite decision of the entire Advisory Committee.**

The evaluation is intended to be advisory. The final decision regarding the defense is to be made by the faculty serving on the defense committee. The outcome of the examination should, however, reflect the scores noted on the evaluation.

The University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Houston
Evaluation of the Ph.D. Defense

Student Name: _____
 Chair of Defense: _____
 Date of Defense: _____

	Poor (1)	Developing (2)	Good (3)	Outstanding (4)	Score
Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited breadth or depth of understanding of the area of study; <input type="checkbox"/> Limited ability to apply information learned in another context to issue(s) at hand; <input type="checkbox"/> Unaware of implications of project to general biomedical sciences.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient breadth or depth (but not both) of the subject; <input type="checkbox"/> With prodding could apply information from another context to project at hand; <input type="checkbox"/> Limited understanding of implications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient breadth and depth of understanding; <input type="checkbox"/> With some help, could apply information from another context to the project; <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient understanding of the implications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Solid breadth and depth of knowledge; <input type="checkbox"/> Able to integrate information from multiple sources; <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent grasp of broader implications of project.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Hypothesis and Aims	<input type="checkbox"/> No hypothesis provided; <input type="checkbox"/> No rationale for hypothesis; <input type="checkbox"/> Aims unfocused; <input type="checkbox"/> Each aim is simply a single experiment; <input type="checkbox"/> Aims interdependent; <input type="checkbox"/> Aims not related to hypothesis.	<input type="checkbox"/> Hypothesis is imprecise/poorly stated; <input type="checkbox"/> Significance of hypothesis is unclear; <input type="checkbox"/> Individual aims are focused, but don't clearly address the hypothesis.	<input type="checkbox"/> Hypothesis is well-stated with adequate rationale; <input type="checkbox"/> Significance of hypothesis is clear and well-stated; <input type="checkbox"/> Aims are generally sufficient to address the hypothesis but need some modification.	<input type="checkbox"/> Very significant and novel hypothesis; <input type="checkbox"/> Strong, clear rationale for hypothesis; <input type="checkbox"/> Well-conceived aims that directly and completely address the hypothesis.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Experimental Approach and Results	<input type="checkbox"/> Experimental design not explained; <input type="checkbox"/> Pitfalls of techniques not understood; <input type="checkbox"/> Results not interpreted or not interpretable.	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiments lack critical controls; <input type="checkbox"/> Theory behind methods not well understood; <input type="checkbox"/> Poor choices of approaches; <input type="checkbox"/> Limited understanding of pitfalls of methods; <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretation of data and discussion of results lack depth.	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiments relevant to the aims; <input type="checkbox"/> Experiments well-designed but need more quantitative analysis; <input type="checkbox"/> Some results not clear – need alternate approaches; <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretation consistent with data.	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiments well-designed with appropriate controls and proper analysis; <input type="checkbox"/> Understands the theory and practice of the methods; <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates pitfalls and uses alternate methods; <input type="checkbox"/> Results clearly explained.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation did not follow the standard format; <input type="checkbox"/> Grammatical errors and misspellings; <input type="checkbox"/> Poor oral presentation; <input type="checkbox"/> Did not understand the questions or did not address the question asked; <input type="checkbox"/> Poor English language skills.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sub-standard writing resulting in lack of clarity; <input type="checkbox"/> Oral presentation was clear, but student read the slides; <input type="checkbox"/> Understood most of the questions but provided only partial answers; <input type="checkbox"/> Spoken English was, for the most part, understandable.	<input type="checkbox"/> For the most part well written, but some discontinuities; <input type="checkbox"/> Clear and focused oral presentation; <input type="checkbox"/> Understood questions and provided adequate answers; <input type="checkbox"/> Spoken English was readily understood.	<input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation clearly written in the appropriate format; <input type="checkbox"/> Poised and polished in the oral presentation; <input type="checkbox"/> Understood the questions and provided clear, thorough, engaging answers; <input type="checkbox"/> Engaged the committee in a collegial discussion; <input type="checkbox"/> Took the proposal to a higher level.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Critical Thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited awareness of important background information; <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty relating results of others to the proposal; <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty identifying limitations and assumptions in the experimental plan; <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty designing experiments testing the central hypothesis; <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty designing alternative experiments in oral presentation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited awareness of and difficulty evaluating background literature; <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness of some weaknesses in experimental plan; <input type="checkbox"/> Able to formulate purposeful experiments related to the central hypothesis, but has difficulty explaining rationale.	<input type="checkbox"/> Could identify and discuss key background for the proposal; <input type="checkbox"/> Could identify strengths and weaknesses of experimental plan; <input type="checkbox"/> Could draw clear conclusions from most important experiments.	<input type="checkbox"/> Able to describe, discuss and critically evaluate relevant background information; <input type="checkbox"/> Able to identify and logically discuss strengths and weaknesses of experimental plan; <input type="checkbox"/> Interprets experimental outcomes and their significance to the central hypothesis clearly and logically; <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriately considered alternative experiments during oral presentation.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4

Return to: wmattox@mdanderson.org or GSBS Office of Academic Affairs, BSRB 3.8344